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LETTER DATED 28 JULY 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Upon instructions of my Government, I have the honour to draw your attention to a clear violation of the 1953 Korean Armistice Agreement which occurred on 16 July 1997, involving the incursion of North Korean soldiers into the area south of the military demarcation line in the demilitarized zone.

At 1057 hours on 16 July, 14 North Korean soldiers crossed the military demarcation line near Cheolwon, Kangwondo, about 75 miles north-east of Seoul, and intruded approximately 70 to 100 metres into the zone under the control of the United Nations Command. Republic of Korea guards observed the North Korean soldiers and over loudspeakers broadcast verbal warnings several times. As the North Korean soldiers ignored these warnings and proceeded further southward, Republic of Korea guards fired warning shots. The North Korean troops fired illegal automatic and heavy weapons, damaging a United Nations Command guard post. Gunfire was exchanged between the two sides for nearly 30 minutes, starting at 1110 hours.

Later on the same day, a United Nations Joint Observer Team/Special Investigation Team conducted an investigation at the site of the incident, and determined that the North Korean Army had committed a violation of the Armistice Agreement. Based on the results of this investigation, the United Nations Command delivered a protest of the Military Armistice Commission to the North Korean side. However, the North Korean Army delegation to Panmunjom informed the United Nations Command Military Armistice Commission that it would not accept the protest.

The Government of the Republic of Korea deplores this incident as yet another deliberate violation of the Korean Armistice Agreement by North Korea, which could undermine peace and stability on the Korean peninsula. The recurrence of Armistice Agreement violations by North Korea is all the more deplorable considering Pyongyang's defiance of the calls by the Security Council to fully observe the Armistice Agreement, as contained in the presidential statement of 15 October 1996 (S/PRST/1996/42) which was adopted in response to the incursion of a North Korean submarine into Republic of Korea territory in

September 1996, as well as in the press statement issued by the President of the Security Council on 11 April 1996 following the incursion of heavily armed North Korean troops into the joint security area of the demilitarized zone.

My Government strongly urges the North Korean authorities to refrain from further military provocations and to abide faithfully by the existing Armistice Agreement, until it is replaced by an alternative arrangement of a permanent nature between the direct parties concerned, as stipulated in the Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-Aggression and Exchanges and Cooperation between the South and the North of Korea, which entered into force on 19 February 1992.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) PARK Soo Gil
Permanent Representative